

This sixth principle is extremely important in interpretation of the Bible, or, in fact, of any other literary work.

The seventh principle is also an important one:

7. WE SHOULD NOT MAKE IT OUR PRIMARY AIM TO LEAD PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THE STORY OF CREATION BUT TO BRING THEM TO CHRIST. Then, as Christians, they should accept it.

Christian people sometimes make the mistake of thinking that in order to lead people to salvation it is necessary to prove to them that there are no mistakes in the Bible. The Bible is a long book. It is the product of the infinite mind of God. God used complex processes in bringing it into existence. The end result of these processes is a book which perfectly expresses His mind and His Word for us. But we cannot expect the finite mind to judge the work of the infinite and to prove that every detail of it is true. It is a work from which we learn truth, not one that merely contains what we already know to be true.

One can understand all that the Bible teaches about the creation of the world and still be lost. One can understand all that is taught about the Trinity and still be lost. One can understand the orthodox doctrine of salvation through Christ and still be lost. The primary purpose of Christian work is not to lead people to a correct understanding of these matters, but it is to show them their need of a Saviour, and to lead them to the foot of the cross where they can be saved from their sins through the all-sufficient work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is very important that this be kept clearly in mind or we may vitiate a large portion of our Christian work.

When a man has accepted Christ, the situation becomes somewhat different.

Every Christian should realize that it is not enough to lead people to Christ, though that need is primary. God wants us not only to be saved; He wants us to go on after we are saved to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. He wants us to come to understand the ideas that are vital for our Christian life. These ideas are expressed in the Bible. The finite mind is in no position to say: "This is spiritual truth: this I must accept; this is historical truth: this I need not accept." The entire Bible is God's Word. It is all true.

Thus in order to lead people to Christ it is not necessary nor wise that we confuse them with long arguments about the details of the story of creation. If an inquirer is particularly bothered by such matters, it may be necessary to examine his particular difficulty and to show him that there is a reasonable answer to the matters that are troubling him. However, we should make sure that the emphasis is kept where it belongs, on the sinful nature of man, on his need of a Saviour, and on the sufficiency of Christ and His readiness to save. After one is saved we must show him how to grow in the Christian life. Unless his growth is to be stunted and warped, he must accept the Bible in its entirety as God's Word. He must approach it, not as a book that he is to judge, and from which he can select what he wishes, but as a representation of the mind of God which he should accept as true in its entirety, and feed upon, that he may grow thereby.

God's Word was not written to tell us all about physics, or chemistry, or biology. It was written to give us an understanding of the truths of salvation. But whenever it touches upon these fields which deal with matters that God has created, what it clearly says cannot be wrong.

The creation of the world is a vital subject, and comes at the very beginning of God's Word. Let us humbly and carefully examine God's book to see what it teaches. Let us not try to explain away anything we find there. Let us accept what we find and go on to enjoy the great spiritual treasures that our Lord has placed there for us.

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